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New York

President: Mr. D'Escoto Brockmann ..... (Nicaragua)

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda items 57 (*continued*) and 43

New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support

(a) New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support

Report of the Secretary-General (A/63/206)

(b) Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa

Report of the Secretary-General (A/63/212)

2001-2010: Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa

Note by the Secretary-General (A/63/219)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Members will recall that the Assembly held its high-level meeting on the theme "Africa's development needs: state of implementation of various commitments, challenges and the way forward" under agenda item 57 at the 3rd and 4th plenary meetings, on 22 September 2008.

(*spoke in English*)

Before we hear from speakers in the debate, I would like to reiterate my mantra, which the General Assembly is coming to know well, namely, that we are now deep into a global economic crisis and that we must reinforce our efforts to protect our dear brothers and sisters in Africa from any retreat by the international community in our support for their development. As the global financial crisis deepens, so does my concern that our commitments may be undone. That would be an unforgivable reversal and bring shame on all of us. While it is understandable that political concerns and financial constraints at home might make us waiver, we must keep in mind that this planet is our home and that Africans are our brothers and sisters. We cannot, as so often in the past, look away.

It is unpopular for politicians to say such things, but we have reached a point when real belt-tightening, and even painful sacrifices, are required. It is also necessary that those sacrifices be shared by all of us without exception.

During the general debate we had an opportunity to hold a high-level debate on Africa's development needs and reviewed the status of implementation of various commitments. I was heartened by the declarations of world leaders, who often passionately appealed to all of us to deliver despite the darkening horizon. By the time we meet at Doha at the end of November to consider financing for development, the full brunt of the financial storm will be upon us. Let us take every opportunity, including our review today of the encouraging progress being made within the framework of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, to reiterate our solidarity and determination to weather that storm together.

Mr. Olago Owuor (Kenya): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the African Group. The African

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Group associates itself with the statement to be made by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The African Group is also thankful to the Secretary-General for his submission of the two reports (A/63/206 and A/63/212) under consideration under sub-items (a) and (b) of agenda item 57, entitled, respectively, "New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support" and "Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa", as well as for his note (A/63/219) submitted under agenda item 43, entitled, "2001-2010: Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa". However, we wish to note that the world has changed significantly since the publication of those reports owing to dynamics in the global economy, particularly the current financial crisis in developed countries.

In that context, the African Group welcomed the adoption of the political declaration on Africa's development needs by heads of State or Government on 22 September 2008. The declaration is a clear undertaking at the highest political level to strengthen support for the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which is Africa's overarching framework for sustainable socio-economic development. It is also important to point out that the declaration came at a time when all economic indicators showed that globalization and the global partnership for Africa's development had yet to deliver Africa's poor from dehumanizing poverty and hunger.

Furthermore, the international community undertook to reinvigorate and strengthen the global partnership of equals based on our common values, mutual accountability, shared responsibility and the determination to collectively act for our common future and to mobilize the resources required to eradicate poverty, hunger and underdevelopment in Africa. We believe that the main objective of that undertaking is to turn existing commitments into concrete actions.

It is important to see Africa's development against the backdrop of the weakened global economy resulting from the energy crisis, food and oil price rises and the current financial crisis in developed countries. They are contributing to the adverse impact on growth and the economic prospects of all African economies, with the potential for severe consequences for the least developed countries in the continent.

The evident slowdown in global growth, the danger posed by the current high commodity prices and the possibility of entrenched long-term effects, the diminished access to finance for investment and the erosion of the balance of payments positions of many countries threaten to undermine the policy gains we have made over the past decade. That is likely to push millions across the African continent over the poverty line.

In view of the foregoing, Africa's growth is projected to slow down in 2008. The growth outlook for Africa may worsen if the global economy experiences a protracted slowdown. It is therefore essential that the international community's policy actions be aimed at supporting NEPAD's objectives of improving economic infrastructure and creating an enabling environment for investment and growth.

Through NEPAD, African leaders have committed themselves to consolidating democracy and good governance and to implementing sustainable socio-economic development programmes. NEPAD adopted the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as the centrepiece of Africa's development agenda. The United Nations system as a whole is mandated to coordinate programmes of action on the continent within the framework established by NEPAD. At the country level, the MDGs also inform the framework for national policy and planning. The Africa Peer Review Mechanism is being rolled out, providing a framework for sharing best practices on the continent. Assistance and support from the donor community are important for the long-term success of NEPAD.

Recent reports suggest that Africa is off-track in meeting the targets set by the MDGs. Africa's achievement of the MDGs will require rising above current crises and taking proactive action to substantially accelerate progress. There is an urgent need to scale up support to African countries to enable them to achieve the MDGs. Action is especially needed to identify precise areas of need in accordance with Africa's own development strategies. Commitments must continue to be translated into concrete action, in particular in the areas of development and poverty eradication. In that respect the report of the MDG Steering Group provides recommendations on how the challenges of achieving the MDGs can be met.

We take note of the Secretary-General's progress report on the implementation of the recommendations

on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/63/212). The causes of conflict in Africa are many. They include extreme poverty, weak State institutions, poor management of natural resources, failure to protect fundamental human rights and increased threats related to climate change.

The African Union has pledged to address conflict and political instability in Africa, with the aim of achieving a conflict-free Africa by 2010. The African Union Peace and Security Council continues to play an important role in the prevention and resolution of conflicts in the continent. We therefore welcome efforts by the United Nations to collaborate with the African Union with a view to building and enhancing the Union's peacekeeping capacity.

The African Union endeavours to address the challenges facing member States emerging from conflict. Post-conflict reconstruction and development are among the tools of the African Union designed to curb the severity and repeated nature of conflicts in Africa and to bring about sustainable development. The African Union's post-conflict reconstruction and development also endeavour to complement the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission's work in identifying States that are at risk of becoming failed States by providing timely help to such States and peoples, and hence contribute towards lowering the rate at which war-torn countries may relapse into conflict. Post-conflict reconstruction and development stress the long-term nature of post-conflict reconstruction strategies that are established within and by communities and States themselves.

The African Group commends the Secretary-General for transmitting to the Assembly the comprehensive report by the World Health Organization on the efforts to contain and reverse the spread of malaria in Africa (A/63/219). Since the beginning of the Decade to Roll Back Malaria, we have witnessed significant progress by the international community and African Governments themselves. The partnerships have been broadened and have involved all stakeholders and concerned communities. Special thanks go to development partners for their continued support in that regard.

The United Nations, together with the international community, needs to display unequivocal political will to operationalize and implement the commitments made to enhance the global partnership for Africa's development. It is important that, in accordance with the political declaration on Africa's development needs, the United Nations should formulate, by the Assembly's sixty-fifth session, a monitoring mechanism to review the implementation of all commitments related to Africa's development, building on existing mechanisms, in order to ensure that Member States continue to be seized with addressing Africa's special needs. That is essential if the United Nations is to fulfil its mandate to achieve an equitable, integrated, coordinated and comprehensive approach to the global partnership for Africa's development to create a better life for the millions of people in Africa. That is the least we can expect from the United Nations, and indeed from all of us.

Mr. Delacroix (France) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). The candidate countries of Turkey and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the potential candidates and members of the Stabilization and Association Process Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia; and Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

As you have requested, Mr. President, my statement will address both agenda item 57, regarding the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and agenda item 43, on the fight against malaria, which primarily pertains to Africa.

Regarding Africa's development, as underscored at the high-level meeting on Africa's development needs, which culminated in the political declaration adopted on 22 September (resolution 63/1), much progress has been achieved, in terms of institutional organization, with the development of the African Union, and in economic terms. Nevertheless, the challenges that the continent still faces remain particularly important. NEPAD, whose ambition is to provide a road map for the renaissance of Africa, is, in our view, a key instrument. We are all committed to contributing actively to its implementation in all its dimensions.

The European Union welcomes the pace of reviews being carried out by the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). The follow-up to the implementation of action plans developed subsequent to those reviews is of major importance: it will be at

the core of the Africa-EU Partnership on Democratic Governance and Human Rights. The concept of equal rights should allow women to participate fully in all aspects of economic, social and political life. In that regard, the European Union supports the current African Union efforts to protect the rights of women and takes note of the proposals submitted by the NEPAD Gender Task Force, which aim to bring about a number of changes to the African Peer Review Mechanism.

NEPAD is also called to reinforce its action, by means of regional integration initiatives, to promote Africa's economic and social development, alongside security and good governance. The European Union has noted the progress, highlighted in the Secretary-General's report (A/63/206), that, with the support of the international community, has been achieved at national and regional levels in numerous areas, including infrastructure, agriculture, health, education, training, the environment, information and communication technologies, science and technology, gender equality, participation by civil society, and the African Peer Review Mechanism. The European Union, in the spirit of partnership, will remain firmly committed to the implementation of NEPAD.

The European Union supports the ongoing efforts to strengthen the cooperation between NEPAD and the African Union. Inter-institutional cooperation is very important among regional organizations, especially between the Commission of the African Union and NEPAD. The European Union notes with great interest and supports the actions undertaken on 10 June in Addis Ababa by Mr. Jean Ping, Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union, with a view to better integration between the African Union and NEPAD. The current crises and climate change make consistency in actions between NEPAD and the African Union particularly necessary. Finally, the European Union encourages NEPAD to step up its efforts to combat HIV/AIDS.

The European Union is fully and unambiguously committed to stand by the African continent, as demonstrated by the adoption of the Joint EU-Africa Strategy in Lisbon in December 2007. Today the implementation of that strategy is actively pursued in all areas. The European Union is Africa's principal development partner. Sixty-two per cent of bilateral aid allocated at the regional level by the European Union went to Africa, and the European Union has reaffirmed its complete commitment to Africa.

As stressed in the 2005 World Summit Outcome document (resolution 60/1), development, human rights and peace and security are inextricably linked and inseparable. The search for peace on the African continent is therefore another of the European Union's priorities, as demonstrated by its commitment to help in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peacekeeping and reconstruction. Under the framework of the African Peace Facility, €250 million were transferred to support the African peace and security architecture between 2005 and 2007. The European Union has promised an additional €300 million for the period from 2008 to 2010. The European Union is also ready to help Africa through the European Union force (EUFOR).

The recent adoption of resolution 62/275, on the causes of conflicts and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa, has enabled progress. The European Union remains committed to dealing with the causes of conflict and contributing to a lasting peace in Africa.

I would now like to focus my observations on 2001-2010: Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa. At present, malaria affects approximately 40 per cent of the world's population, and Africa is particularly hard hit. Of the 105 countries afflicted by this scourge, 45 are in Africa. It is first and foremost a human tragedy, causing more than 800,000 deaths each year, 91 per cent of which are in Africa. It is the leading cause of death among young children in sub-Saharan Africa. But the consequences of this epidemic go well beyond that; it is a handicap for the development and stability of the continent. It is estimated that $12 billion of the African gross domestic product is lost annually to malaria. The fight against malaria must therefore be considered a global emergency in order to defeat poverty.

The report transmitted by the Secretary-General (A/63/219) gives reason for hope, as it highlights the progress made in eradicating the disease. A net reduction in malaria has been recorded in certain countries and regions, sometimes as much as 50 per cent. Those reductions have been seen in Eritrea, Rwanda, South Africa, Namibia, Swaziland and Zanzibar. This is evidence that a strategy

combining anti-vector measures, particularly the use of insecticide-treated mosquito nets, and the use of treatments is effective and produces visible and lasting results.

The European Union is aware of the logistical and, above all, economic obstacles that often confront countries in the implementation of those measures. The European Union strongly supports the activities of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and UNITAID — the International Drug Purchase Facility — which have enabled considerable progress in the provision of long-lasting insecticide-treated mosquito nets and ACT, artemisinin-based combination therapy. Contributions from the countries of the European Union and the European Commission account for 60 per cent of the Global Fund. The European Union would like to pay tribute to the role of the Roll Back Malaria Partnership, which is essential to the coordination of international action against malaria.

The European Union is fully committed to the fight against the scourge of malaria and determined to continue its efforts. The results observed in certain countries demonstrate that the eradication of the pandemic is within our reach. We can attain Millennium Development Goal 6 of controlling malaria and reversing current trends between now and 2015. To achieve that, mobilization must be global, bringing together Governments, international organizations, the private sector and civil society. We must continue our efforts. Our attention should be focused on vulnerable populations and in particular on children and pregnant women, on whom the continent's future depends.

Mr. Pramudwinai (Thailand): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN): Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam.

Africa's challenge is the world's challenge. The successful development of Africa, with its total population of over 920 million people, will be a success for us all. Now is the critical time for the development of Africa. We are standing at the midpoint for the realization of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Only seven years are left before the 2015 MDG deadline, but the challenges ahead are still daunting. According to the Secretary-General's reports on the subject, despite strong overall economic performances recently in many African countries, not one is on track to achieve all of the MDGs. Food, oil and financial crises, climate change, unfulfilled official development assistance (ODA) commitments and the stalled Doha Round have undermined their development efforts.

There is still hope, however. Thanks to the leadership and resolve of African leaders and their peoples, there are clear signs of progress. The international community must build on those positive developments and redouble its efforts to help African countries tackle the formidable challenges they are facing. The United Nations and its relevant agencies can play a greater role in that endeavour.

The emphasis for the international community should be on forging and strengthening partnership for mutual benefit rather than on creating dependence. Thus, Africa's determination to be in charge of its own development and to work with development partners in an atmosphere of respect and equality — as embodied in the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) — should be given strong support.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) supports the determination to implement NEPAD. ASEAN supports NEPAD because it mobilizes and strengthens cooperation among regional organizations. That synergy has the potential to generate positive and dynamic development outcomes. ASEAN will also continue to support NEPAD as a coherent and concerted framework for engaging Africa's development issues. As part of that thrust, ASEAN urges the international community to build on the momentum created by the recent high-level meeting to address Africa's development needs, held on 22 September 2008 in New York. The political declaration adopted at the end of that meeting has all the answers on how best to respond effectively to Africa's development needs. All that is needed is for us to honour commitments already made and to turn words into deeds. In that context, ASEAN welcomes the mechanism formulated at the high-level meeting to review the full and timely implementation of all commitments related to Africa's development needs.

Asia's strong support for Africa's development should come as no surprise since we have a long history of fraternity between us. The first Asia-Africa summit was held in Bandung, Indonesia, and gave birth to the "Bandung Spirit" of solidarity, friendship and

cooperation between Asia and Africa. The Spirit was reaffirmed by the participation of then-President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa on behalf of the African Union at the eighth ASEAN summit in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, in November 2002. At that meeting, President Mbeki not only recalled the historical roots of cooperation between Asia and Africa, but also commended ASEAN for its South-South cooperation programmes.

The bonds of fraternity are strong because ASEAN leaders recognize that they share much common ground with African aspirations. On that basis, they acknowledge the need for greater interaction between ASEAN and the African Union. Leaders also agreed to take steps to promote stronger ties between Asia and Africa, including by convening an ASEAN-NEPAD conference. That desire took on the form of a process activated by the Asia-Africa Subregional Organizations Conference. The process was initiated in Bandung, Indonesia, in 2003. The second Conference was held in Durban, South Africa, in 2004.

In 2005, the Asia-Africa summit held in Bandung to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Bandung Spirit launched the New Asia-Africa Strategic Partnership. The Partnership is rooted within a framework calling for political solidarity, economic cooperation and improved sociocultural relations. As an expression of collaboration between southern countries, it should enjoy the full support of the United Nations Development Programme's Special Unit for South-South Cooperation.

While African countries are forging closer ties among themselves, ASEAN is also transforming itself into a rules-based, people-oriented community designed to integrate South-East Asia. In that process, ASEAN will continue to function as an outward-looking organization with an agenda stressing beneficial global partnerships, including close working relationships with Africa.

A strong foundation has already been laid for such ties with Africa. ASEAN countries have paved the way through many partnership projects with African countries. Today, policymakers, development actors and experts in various fields from ASEAN countries are working hand in hand with their counterparts in many African countries in areas such as human resources development, capacity-building, public health, infectious diseases, food security, fisheries and agricultural development.

ASEAN is keen to explore other avenues of partnership with Africa. As developing countries ourselves, ASEAN countries understand the nature of the challenges facing African countries. We are therefore willing to share with our African partners the experiences and lessons we have learned in tackling development challenges, many of which resemble development challenges that African countries are currently facing. Other forms of partnership, such as trilateral partnership, should also be further encouraged to maximize the synergetic potential of partnership between ASEAN, Africa and donor countries in response to Africa's development needs.

ASEAN believes that the sound and sustainable development of any country or region requires a favourable international environment if it is to succeed. The development of Africa is no exception. That is why ASEAN has been following the gathering global financial storm very closely. We ASEAN countries learned through our own painful experience in the 1990s that a major financial crisis can spawn multiple crises with far-reaching consequences for the development of nations near and far. Therefore, ASEAN calls upon all parties concerned to work together to arrest the current downward spiral and prevent panic in the world economy.

ASEAN urges its development partners to take steps to ensure that the current crisis in the world financial market does not adversely impact development partnerships or hinder assistance for developing countries, including in Africa. Donors should not let the current financial crisis distract them from their commitments to scale up and reverse the decline in ODA disbursement in the next few years. Steps should also be taken to improve the effectiveness of ODA in support of the national development strategies adopted by African countries.

ASEAN believes that integral to international development cooperation is the operation of an open and fair global trading system. The need for such a system has never been greater or more urgent, especially in the area of agricultural commodities. Those products make up the main exports of developing countries in Asia, Africa and other parts of the world. We therefore call on all parties concerned

not only to promptly resume the Doha Round, but also to conclude it.

Now is the time for each of us to show leadership and for all of us to provide collective leadership. We all know what is required for Africa to achieve the MDGs: all we need to do is work together to make it happen. ASEAN is ready to do so and looks forward to strengthening its partnership with Africa in all areas of mutual benefit.

Mr. Talbot (Guyana): As this is the first statement to be made on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in the plenary of the General Assembly at its sixty-third session, permit me to convey to you, Sir, the felicitations of all of CARICOM on your election to guide the important deliberations of this session and to express to you our best wishes for a successful tenure.

I am especially pleased to address the theme of today's debate — the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) — on behalf of the 14 States members of CARICOM that are Members of this Organization. The Caribbean is umbilically linked to the African continent by strong bonds. It is a link established through the horrors of the Middle Passage, nurtured in the struggle against colonialism and apartheid, and today sustained by a sense of shared purpose and common destiny. CARICOM is pleased to renew its solidarity with Africa's quest for durable peace, sustainable development, the strengthening of democracy and the guarantee of full enjoyment by all its citizens of their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The high-level meeting on Africa's development needs, held on 22 September 2008, took account of the state of implementation of various commitments, the challenges encountered and the way forward, and adopted a Political Declaration (resolution 63/1). That meeting, having followed others including the Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development, sustained the considerable attention that the international community has rightly been devoting to Africa.

Africa and its partners have taken several actions to ensure progress in the implementation of national and subregional development plans and strategies. Most notably, however, Africa's response is crystallized and coordinated within the ambit of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, which is the continent's overarching framework for socio-economic development. CARICOM has observed with much interest the steps that have been taken to implement that strategic framework for Africa's development.

Africa's quest is beset by myriad challenges, including those related to inadequate infrastructure and industrialization and to a lack of requisite human and institutional capacities. The continent needs to see substantially increased investments in those areas if it is to ensure a firm basis for sustained growth and sustainable development. As the report of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Africa Steering Group notes, the region has grown by some 3.6 per cent per year during periods of accelerated growth but, conversely, has shrunk by 2.7 per cent during periods of growth collapse. In addition, growth volatility in sub-Saharan Africa is some five times higher than that observed in low- and middle-income countries generally, as shown by the coefficient of variation of GDP growth per capita. CARICOM therefore underscores the urgency of finding solutions to Africa's major challenges.

Africa will no doubt feel some of the effects of the current financial crisis, which has cast a pall over the prospects of the world economy. Its traditional markets are at stake. And the threat of a further cutback in official development assistance (ODA) is now a real prospect as many developed countries struggle to safeguard their financial and banking systems from collapse. The crisis now serves to poignantly underscore our global and mutual interdependence. In the wake of the food crisis and high oil prices, the financial crisis is also a stark reminder that the policies of systemically important countries have serious impact on the fortunes of States far and wide, not least those of the African continent.

A special responsibility therefore devolves on developed countries to ensure that their policies, both domestic and foreign, contribute to peace, stability and prosperity in the world. In our view, that entails greater coherence across various policy domains, including in financial, trade, development and environmental policies. CARICOM underscores that, as expressed in the 22 September Declaration, all commitments to and by Africa to comprehensively address the special development needs of the continent should be effectively implemented and given appropriate follow-up by the international community and by Africa itself.

While Africa is not currently on track to achieve the 2015 MDG targets, it is also evident that, at current rates, the commitment to double aid to Africa by 2010, as articulated at the Group of Eight Summit in Gleneagles, will also not be fulfilled. Although the international community has provided support for Africa's development, that assistance needs to be substantially increased and made more effective. In some cases, support programmes have not been adequately tailored to the needs and specificities of individual African countries. It is therefore essential that all ODA-related commitments by developed countries be fulfilled to improve the prospects for achieving the MDGs in Africa.

Considerable gains are possible if the international community translates its many commitments into actions. Africa's debt sustainability challenges must also be tackled coherently and its international trade facilitated and promoted, including through regional integration, greater integration into the global economy and the fulfilment of our global commitment to a well-functioning, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system that is supportive of sustainable development. In addition, given the importance of agriculture in the development of the continent and in order to cope with the current food crisis, African countries should strive to meet the Maputo Declaration target of devoting 10 per cent of public expenditure to agricultural and rural development in initiating a green African revolution and should be strongly supported by the international community in that endeavour.

Indeed, Africa continues to face formidable challenges in consolidating the basic conditions for peace and development. CARICOM applauds Africa's successes in that area, even as we observe its setbacks with concern, conscious of the devastating human and economic toll of armed conflict and absolute poverty. Greater attention must therefore be focused on eliminating the combination of internal and external factors that engender conflict and stymie development. We also support Africa's efforts to improve both economic and political governance and to strengthen mechanisms for the participation, inclusion and empowerment of all segments of society — including civil society, women and girls, communities and households — in political and development processes. Like Africa, CARICOM believes that good governance provides the foundation for peace, security and prosperity. In that context, we have noted with interest the design and implementation of the Peer Review Mechanism as a worthy instrument in that regard.

Perhaps the most salient of the lessons learned from the high-level meeting on Africa's development, held in September, was the recognition that Africa is capable of, and has dedicated much effort to, resolving the challenges it faces. Nonetheless, those endeavours must be supported and complemented by efforts on the part of the international community.

The Africa Steering Group report makes clear that the full implementation of appropriate policies can produce verifiable development results that can help to ensure the effective use of domestic and external resources and, inter alia, lay the foundation for robust economic growth. Africa provides a barometre of overall development progress. The international community must utilize it is as a window of opportunity.

In that regard, success stories on the achievement towards individual Goals across a range of countries show that rapid progress can be made when sound domestic policies are matched with substantial technical and financial support from the international community. CARICOM applauds the leadership shown by African countries in addressing their major challenges and in charting the way forward for the region in the context of the African Union, as well as through other national and subregional approaches.

CARICOM has followed with great interest the creative efforts of the African Union in the development of new institutional arrangements. Those efforts are geared to accelerate integration on the continent in order to enable Africa to better take its rightful place in the world and to strengthen relations with its diaspora. As shown by the visit of an East African delegation to the CARICOM secretariat just last week, there is much scope for exchanges of our development and other experience in the ambit of South-South cooperation.

In closing, CARICOM calls on the international community to significantly enhance its support for Africa's development through NEPAD. We also look forward to working with our brothers and sisters of Africa to further strengthen institutional mechanisms for collaboration between Africa and the Caribbean in support of mutual development objectives. Africa will ever find in CARICOM a staunch supporter for the

continued progress of Africa and the full implementation of its aspirations.

Mr. Christian (Ghana): Ghana associates itself with the statement made on behalf of the African Group and the Group of 77 and China.

The Secretary-General has appropriately described the development challenges of Africa as a development emergency. We are aware that the basic conditions required for sustained peace and development have yet to be adequately consolidated on the continent. Poverty, weak State institutions, poor management of natural resources, the failure to protect human rights and threats related to climate change are still persistent.

The Constitutive Act of the African Union acknowledges that conflicts in Africa constitute a major impediment to its socio-economic development. In addition to unfortunate historical legacies, African leaders have also come to terms with the fact that the impoverishment of the continent has been partly due to shortcomings in the policies pursued by many countries in the post-independence era.

This was the state of affairs on the continent when the Secretary-General wrote his seminal report "The causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa" (A/52/871). Considerable progress has been made since that report first appeared in 1998. Today, the number of African countries afflicted by conflicts is fewer than it was a decade ago. The improved institutional effectiveness in responding to conflict through peacekeeping, especially by Africans themselves, has been a major factor in containing violent conflicts on the continent.

The new generation of African leaders, in their determination to change course, adopted the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) as a strategic development framework to address the many development challenges facing the continent and its populations. NEPAD establishes the conditions for sustainable development by ensuring peace and security, building democracy and good governance, engendering policy reforms and increased investments in priority sectors, and mobilizing resources for development. Furthermore, the leaders have committed themselves to actively promoting human rights, the rule of law and the consolidation of democracy by, for instance, subscribing to the African Peer Review Mechanism.

However, as African countries embark on that journey, they continue to face daunting challenges that are beyond their control. Factors such as the current global financial crisis, the stalled Doha Development Round of trade negotiations and a general lack of a conducive international economic environment continue to impede Africa's development efforts both directly and indirectly.

Many African countries have pledged to increase their health budgets to 15 per cent of public expenditure so as to fight diseases such as HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other infectious diseases, but to date, only a few countries have reached that goal. That is because the chronic financial and institutional constraints facing most African countries have been aggravated by the brain drain that has resulted in the already few doctors, nurses and other health professionals, trained with meagre resources, leaving in droves in search of better conditions of service abroad. The brain drain has also affected professionals and skilled personnel in other sectors of the economy, thereby depriving the affected countries of much-needed human capital for development.

In the area of education, Ghana finds it unacceptable that currently over 1.4 million Ghanaian children do not go to school. To redress the situation, the Government is making heavy investments at all levels of the country's education system. For instance, Ghana launched educational reforms to put the country in a better position to achieve the targets under Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 2. A cornerstone of the reforms is the introduction of a free and compulsory universal basic education from kindergarten through primary school to junior high school.

We are using various mechanisms, such as a capitation grant and school feeding programme, to boost enrolment. Special attention is paid to girls' education and, on the average, the rate of enrolment of the girl child has surpassed her male counterpart. To attain its goals and achieve quality education, the Government is working tirelessly to improve the conditions of service of Ghanaian teachers, including retraining and upgrading their professional skills, in addition to appreciable increases in the levels of their remuneration.

So far, the results of our efforts have been mixed. There is still resistance to enrolment due, among other things, to cultural and economic factors. There are wide disparities in access to education between the various regions and also between urban and rural areas. The uneven distribution of access appears to have been aggravated by our high birth rate as well as by rapid urbanization. We are also faced with the challenges of inadequate and obsolete training facilities, poor logistics and a host of other problems.

Despite existing challenges in the health sector, Ghana continues to strive to meet the targets in MDGs 4, 5 and 6. Through the National Health Insurance Scheme, which has taken off and is still being improved, the Government aims to increase public access to health care, improve the quality and efficiency of health care delivery, as well as improve and increase programmes of education on curative and preventive health-care. Ghana has also managed to institute free medical care for expectant women to encourage more women to make use of modern medical facilities, reduce their exposure to unqualified traditional birth attendants and thereby promote overall reproductive health.

Although our efforts have resulted in some appreciable reduction in child mortality, Ghana will not find it easy to meet the targeted rate of reduction by 2015 due to the limited access to health facilities, including the wide doctor-patient ratio and the general problem of retaining health personnel that the nation has been facing for some time now.

We are counting on the continued support of our development partners to meet the shortfalls in funds for the education and health sectors, which have far reaching impacts on the other MDGs. The Government is working with agencies such as UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Health Organization, the United Kingdom's Department for International Development, and the United States Agency for International Development, among other bilateral partners, to complement its efforts.

Malaria remains one of the deadliest diseases in Africa, killing more than 1 million people each year, mostly children and pregnant women. Although the disease is widespread, it does not enjoy the high profile visibility of other issues of similar scale and impact. In Ghana, malaria is prevalent throughout the country and is responsible for over 40 per cent of outpatient visits and approximately 20 per cent of deaths in children under five years.

In recent years, several African countries have made commitments to bringing malaria under control. In 2000, 44 African leaders signed the Abuja Declaration committing their countries to work towards a 50 per cent decrease in malaria deaths in Africa by 2010. Those efforts have been supported by development partners through such programmes as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and the President's Malaria Initiative launched by the United States Government to provide financial resources to African countries to fight malaria. A recent United Nations report confirmed that more African children were getting insecticide-treated bednets and being treated for malaria.

There is concern, nonetheless, that most African nations remain off track in reaching the goal of halting and reversing the incidence of the disease. It is in that light that we laud the initiative of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to end malaria deaths by 2010. The initiative is a bold but achievable one, given the necessary leadership, commitment and will to fight malaria. It is imperative that we work together to realize the vision. Eliminating malaria deaths will remove a major barrier to economic development and provide significant momentum towards reaching at least four of the MDGs. We are already midway to the 2015 deadline set for the achievement of the MDGs. Therefore, the urgency of the Secretary-General's call to action cannot be overstated.

Mr. Salgueiro (Portugal), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Africa is endowed with natural resources that represent a vast potential that can be harnessed for the continent's development. We recognize that, with the right combination of sound domestic policies and the timely fulfilment of long-standing pledges of support, the story of the Continent could be different in 2015.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The gradual socio-economic development of the African Continent is necessary to effectively address global threats and challenges, including in the area of security. Russia fully supports the efforts of the international community to turn Africa into a zone of active partnership and to establish conditions on the continent conducive to peace and sustainable development. We are firmly committed to meeting

international obligations to assist Africa, especially with respect to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

We are grateful to the Secretary-General for the substantial reports on the achievements of NEPAD (A/63/206 and A/63/212) and will continue to view that initiative as a main channel for the countries of the continent in attaining the MDGs. NEPAD is universally recognized as a platform for interaction with Africa and an important reference point for the international community's consideration of international assistance to the continent in the framework of the United Nations, the Group of Eight and its Africa Partnership Forum.

Russia welcomed the holding on 22 September of the General Assembly's high-level meeting on Africa's development needs. The political declaration adopted at the meeting reflects the resolve of Member States to strengthen and intensify international cooperation to find a long-term solution to Africa's development needs. The priority task now is for all countries to effectively honour the commitments they have undertaken.

As the meeting confirmed yet again, the African continent requires the special attention of the international community in the context of attaining the MDGs. We welcome the commitment of leaders of African countries to attaining the MDGs. We note the progress in a number of areas, such as the positive momentum towards achieving children's access to basic education in sub-Saharan Africa. At the same time, there is a serious lag in attaining the MDGs in such areas as the reduction of mother and child mortality rates, the eradication of HIV/AIDS, guaranteed health care and others.

Russia has consistently favoured a global partnership in the interest of creating reliable mechanisms for sustainable development on the continent and of strengthening regional stability. Meeting the special needs of Africa, especially helping to overcome poverty, is a priority of Russian international development policies. For many decades, our country, prompted by the principles of solidarity and equal partnership, has provided considerable assistance to African States. Our help has allowed a number of states to resolve serious economic problems and to lay the basis for subsequent industrialization. As a responsible development partner, Russia is actively reviving its donor potential and will continue to make a significant contribution to the international efforts to render comprehensive assistance to Africa.

We are playing a leadership role in debt write-offs to the countries of the continent. In the past two years alone, Russia has cancelled African debts to the tune of $10 billion, almost double the general total of cancellations. At the same time, we are increasing our contributions to international development programmes. We have voluntarily contributed a total of $40 million to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Our country has set aside $20 million to fight malaria and $18 million to eradicate polio once and for all. Most of that assistance has been directed to the African continent.

A key task at this stage is to encourage investment in the infrastructure of African countries, especially in the cross-border context. With our help, Africa is carrying out a number of investment projects. Major Russian companies are working in Angola, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Nigeria, Gabon, South Africa, Algeria, Libya and Egypt. A very useful mechanism in support of investment, entrepreneurial investment and innovative activities in Africa is the NEPAD Africa Fund to finance measures to improve the investment climate. It also serves to encourage investment in small- and medium-sized enterprises and to develop the microfinancing system.

Russia supported the initiative to form partnerships to enhance the efficiency of Africa's financial sector. Among the priority areas of cooperation are the diversification of and expansion of access to financial services for the poor, and increasing the transparency and absorptive capacities of recipient Governments.

The problem of hunger and providing food remains one of the main socio-economic challenges facing almost all the countries of the continent. We feel that the Rome Declaration and the Comprehensive Framework for Action prepared by the High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis can serve as a solid basis for strengthening the efforts of the international community in that area.

In terms of the global food crisis, it is more important than ever to adopt measures to enhance African agriculture on the basis of three key activities:

the selection of more efficient crops; the expansion and improvement of irrigation; and the active introduction of modern agricultural technology and the rational use of chemical fertilizers. Support for such work comes from national initiatives and the NEPAD/African Union Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme.

Another key issue in providing for a prosperous future for the African continent is the settlement and prevention of armed conflict. We are convinced that, in order to provide more stable peace on the continent, it is necessary first and foremost for the Africans themselves to take active positions. We welcome the active work of the African Union to create an African standby force and early warning systems. We also welcome the dialogue between the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union on resolving acute crisis situations.

It is important to adopt measures to counter illegal armed formations, promote good-neighbourly relations, strengthen cooperation on border security, seal borders against the spread of conflicts and the transfer of weapons and mercenaries, and end the gross violations of international humanitarian law and impunity for crimes against humanity.

As a permanent member of the Security Council, Russia is making a significant contribution to the international community's development of policies and practical measures on issues related to the strengthening of peace and security in the region. We participate in all United Nations operations in Africa. We have recently expanded training for African peacebuilding troops and law enforcement officers. This year, through the specialized training institutions of the Ministry of the Interior, we plan to train 350 staff members of African interior ministries.

Seeking to strengthen the United Nations peacekeeping potential and to assist African countries in post-conflict stabilization, as of this year the Russian Federation has decided to make annual contributions of $2 million to the Peacebuilding Fund.

We shall continue to work purposefully to put in place effective sustainable development models in Africa while strengthening regional stability and helping a number of countries in numerous areas to solve other urgent problems facing the continent.

Mr. Benmehidi (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): This year, the General Assembly's consideration of items relating to peace and development in Africa is taking place against the particular backdrop of the international community's growing interest in crucial questions relating to the African continent and the world's current economic and financial situation. On 22 September 2008, the General Assembly held a timely high-level meeting on the theme "Africa's development needs: state of implementation of various commitments, challenges and the way forward". That event was an opportunity to focus the international community's attention on Africa's problems and once again to address the problems of and impediments to Africa's genuine social and economic development. It was also an opportunity for representatives of the international community, and especially those of developed countries, to renew their commitment to providing the necessary support to Africa.

The General Assembly also addressed the particular situation of the African continent in that regard during the high-level meeting on the midterm review of the progress made in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). On that occasion, it was clearly recognized that, if nothing changes fundamentally between now and 2015, at the current pace most African countries will not achieve the Goals by the target date.

Moreover, this year's debate is taking place in an international environment characterized by the multifaceted financial, energy, food and climate crises being experienced throughout the world. Africa appears to have been doubly penalized by those crises. On the one hand, it is the continent least prepared to deal with them, due to the overall level of the continent's development; on the other, it is at risk of suffering negative repercussions in terms of the level of development assistance provided to Africa.

Algeria, which was among the first African countries to promote the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), would like to emphasize both the importance of that innovative framework and the new tool it offers the continent for dealing with its foreign partners. Following the many laudable but structurally deficient initiatives launched since the 1980s, NEPAD has brought to bear an innovative approach to development and cooperation in Africa. NEPAD, a framework longed for and developed by Africans themselves, is an effective guiding

mechanism to draw the attention of Africa's development partners to the major issues of concern to the continent. In essence, NEPAD embodies Africa's desire to ensure its own prosperity and economic and social development, its determination to mobilize the continent's resources and potential, and its readiness to promote substantial partnerships commensurate with the challenges.

NEPAD relies primarily on Africa's national and regional potential and responds to needs and desires identified by Africans themselves. Given the enormous task and scope of the challenges ahead, NEPAD also constitutes a call by Africa to its partners to assist the continent in its efforts to endow itself with the means, infrastructure and resources — in a word, the necessary conditions — to join the world economy, which is the only way to ensure lasting social and economic development.

NEPAD was integrated into African Union structures at an extraordinary summit held in Algiers in 2007. One of the main decisions of that summit was to establish a continent-wide NEPAD authority, referred to as a development agency. Although the implementation committee comprised of NEPAD heads of State continues to be the highest political decision-making body, the development agency will be responsible for developing and implementing specific NEPAD projects. It will thereby serve as the principal interlocutor for foreign partners.

The report (A/63/206) submitted by the Secretary-General under the relevant agenda item points out both the scope of the programmes launched under NEPAD and the importance of the progress that has been made. It also emphasizes the need for increased involvement by the international community in that new partnership. Whether in the areas of infrastructure, health or education, considerable progress has been made in recent years thanks to the implementation of regional infrastructure projects in Africa. Those projects, which are being carried out in more and more countries, are helping, among other things, to increasingly integrate African economies and to develop thriving African markets.

Ambitious projects have been launched in the agricultural sector since 2006, in particular the multinational agricultural productivity programme designed to promote the exchange of experiences and knowledge with partners and the allocation by all member States of at least 10 per cent of their national budgets to agricultural development. In that way, key sectors such as the environment, information technology and scientific research have benefited from sustained attention at the regional level in Africa. As we have seen, such projects involve all economic and social sectors, where the needs are great and where delays are especially significant. They require considerable financing, that African economies, despite average annual growth of 6 per cent, cannot provide. It is currently estimated that $72 billion will be required for several consecutive years in order to truly reverse the trend and ensure Africa's economic development.

Algeria reiterates its appreciation for the contributions of many partners whose commitment and efforts, along with those of African countries, have made a difference on the ground. Such resolute efforts have continued for some 10 years in an attempt to alleviate the debt of the most heavily indebted countries, especially in Africa. By the end of 2007, Africa's global debt, which in the late 1990s was about $274 billion, stood at $243 billion. More important yet, in the same period, the rate of indebtedness of African countries dropped from 212 per cent to 23.1 per cent. Nevertheless, we must do everything possible to prevent a return to the cycle of indebtedness of the 1980s and 1990s, which devoured the meagre resources of African countries and completely obliterated the chances of growing their economies.

However, the situation is not the same with regard to official development assistance (ODA). Far short of reaching the target of 0.7 per cent of the gross national income of donor countries, in real terms there has been a consistent drop in ODA year after year. In some instances, significant amounts of ODA have been allocated to debt remittances which, by definition, do not directly contribute to financing development. The downward trend was further confirmed in 2007, when ODA for Africa decreased by 20 per cent to $35 billion, compared to $44 billion in 2006.

Those figures and trends need to be seen against the backdrop of the conclusions of the MDG Africa Steering Group established by the Secretary-General to "galvanize international support for Africa's development and catalyse the efforts of the Group of Eight and the main multilateral institutions working in the domain". The Secretary-General has, indeed, stated that the Group's work helped to determine that, at this

stage, $72 billion a year would be necessary to achieve the MDGs by 2015.

Africa's share in world trade has fallen continuously in recent years and is now at less than 2 per cent. While that illustrates the weakness of African economic investment in international markets, the low figure is also the result of significant agricultural subsidies provided by the developed countries for their exports. African countries are also requesting concrete measures to be implemented to ensure the access of African goods, consisting primarily of agricultural products, to the markets of developed countries under normal conditions.

The consideration of issues relating to NEPAD and African development would remain incomplete if it did not take into account the need to ensure and promote viable and durable peace throughout the continent. We cannot insist often enough on the fact that no real development can occur without an environment of peace and stability. African countries and their continental organization, the African Union, have made an unprecedented effort to adapt and to strengthen African conflict prevention and peacekeeping capabilities. That commitment and effort, which have benefited from assistance from foreign partners and the United Nations, has been reflected in the structuring and establishment of institutional and operational means for increasingly effective action; the establishment of operational capabilities that can be mobilized and deployed throughout the continent; and the strengthening of the mechanisms and instruments of cooperation with the United Nations and other partners in the framework of conflict prevention and peacekeeping. However, all of those projects continue to require greater contributions from the partners.

At a time of digital revolution and unprecedented development in information technology and the globalized economy, the world must work to full capacity and use all means at its disposal to take on the multiple challenges and crises that threaten it. In that context, instead of being a burden, Africa could and should be a major agent for development. It would then cease to be part of the problem and become an integral part of the solution.

Mr. Mansour (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I am pleased to express my delegation's appreciation for the very enriching introduction with which the President opened this joint debate devoted to the economic and social situation in Africa, and particularly to international support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

Before discussing certain points of special interest to Tunisia, I wish to associate myself fully with the statement made by the representative of Kenya, on behalf of the African Group, and that to be made shortly by the representative of Antigua and Barbados on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The growing interest in Africa of the international community and the United Nations system in particular can be explained by two facts. On the one hand, the African continent has been affected by the scourges of poverty, conflict and pandemics which, to a large extent, explains why it has clearly fallen behind the agreed schedule for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). On the other hand, Africa is a continent on the move that is assuming responsibility for its own affairs and moving forward politically and economically at the national and regional levels in order to look after itself and to pull through. The high-level debate held recently on Africa's development needs addressed the state of affairs in Africa and stressed two main points.

First, Africa's needs, constraints, priorities and objectives are well known by its partners and by the actors in the international community. The problem is at the level of the implementation of the commitments undertaken. My delegation takes this opportunity to join other countries in calling for the establishment of a follow-up mechanism mandated to evaluate the implementation of commitments to advance the development of Africa, including those listed in the political declaration adopted at the close of the high-level meeting.

Secondly, Africa is the only continent whose progress remains below the level required to achieve the MDGs and has been far more severely affected than others by the food and energy crises. Africa therefore faces a double handicap that threatens to compromise the progress achieved.

The sixth report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of and international support for NEPAD (A/63/206) offers a mixed assessment, simultaneously optimistic and dubious of the impact and scope of progress achieved. On the one hand, it shows the existence of new momentum towards African development, albeit one that is not strong

enough to be lasting. On the other hand, it urges the continent's development partners to honour their commitments in this area more purposefully.

In his report, the Secretary-General advocates the strengthening of national and regional capacities to implement NEPAD and to ensure consistency and coordination between national development plans and NEPAD priorities, as well as between African countries and regional development agencies.

Additionally, the Secretary-General calls on Africa's development partners to create an innovative mechanism to coordinate their activities in the area of aid, trade and debt sustainability. In that context, however, we fear that if the current trend continues, the Group of Eight will not be able to fully implement the commitment it undertook at the Gleneagles summit in 2005 to double its assistance to Africa by 2010 to approximately $50 billion annually. The MDG Africa Steering Group, created by the Secretary-General to serve as a catalyst for international efforts to help Africa, concluded that the full achievement of the MDGs in Africa by the 2015 deadline will require a yearly sum of $72 billion. The Doha Follow-up International Conference will be an important stage, even a turning point, to consolidate gains and to launch a new process to finance development. In that connection, my delegation stresses the specific needs of Africa in financing for development, particularly at this time of crisis.

Despite Africa's resolve to look after itself by adopting restructuring plans; despite the progress made in settling disputes that have jeopardized the development of many countries for so long; and despite the fact that it constitutes a priority for the international agenda, Africa is still far behind in terms of the timetable for achieving the MDGs. That is unlikely to help Africa to accelerate its integration into the world economy and thereby ensure lasting development and the gradual settlement to conflicts. Peace will always be precarious and reversible without a favourable economic environment and genuine development prospects.

The Secretary-General's ambitious goal of achieving a conflict-free Africa by 2010 continues to depend on a certain level of economic growth, human development and political stability, which a number of African countries, especially the poorer ones, will not be able to achieve without the help of all their development partners. In that context, we salute the efforts of the African Union, in particular its Peace and Security Council, since the prevention, management and resolution of conflict and post-conflict situations are, among others, preconditions for the achievements of the MDGs and a NEPAD priority.

To that end, the Peace and Security Council should be strengthened in material, political, legal, normative and institutional terms. Structured, targeted and coordinated cooperation between the African Union and the United Nations could strengthen African capacities to prevent conflict and to maintain and consolidate peace. Furthermore, we commend the efforts of the Peacebuilding Commission, which are a true asset from which Africa can benefit, as our continent is the theatre of 75 per cent of all conflict and post-conflict situations.

In addition to poverty and conflicts, Africa suffers from the ravages of pandemics, in particular malaria and HIV/AIDS — scourges whose repercussions severely affect human resources and prospects for development. While the report of the Secretary-General on malaria certainly describes a situation that gives us reasons for hope, the road ahead remains long in meeting one of the major MDG targets: halting malaria by 2015. As the efforts and the progress made in that regard have not been able to bring about a lasting reversal of the current trend, the scourge continues to rage, particularly in Africa. Let us pay closer attention to its ravages, which will require effective joint mobilization efforts.

Mr. Sumi (Japan): It is a great pleasure and honour to address the Assembly today to discuss the very important agenda items relating to African development. Before I begin, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General and his staff for their diligent work in consolidating the reports that we have received.

African development is one of the most urgent priorities for the world and the United Nations today. The 22 September high-level meeting on Africa's development needs successfully increased the momentum needed to follow up on the various commitments made to and by Africa and also served as a forum for the international community to hear the views of African leaders on that subject. Throughout the round tables, many expressed the view that private investment and infrastructure development were of

critical importance. The same view was expressed at the Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) in May and at the Group of Eight (G8) Hokkaido Toyako Summit in July.

We have heard the voices of African leaders, and now it is time for us to respond. For its part, Japan pledged the following at TICAD IV: first, to double its official development assistance (ODA) to Africa; secondly, to proactively and flexibly provide up to $4 billion in soft loans; and thirdly, to work to double Japanese private investment in Africa over the next five years. Our ODA will focus on the priority areas of infrastructure development, including in the area of agriculture; achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); and combating climate change. Loans will focus more specifically on infrastructure development through enhanced public-private partnerships with a view to improving the investment climate in Africa.

In implementing those commitments, the Government of Japan aligns its priorities with those set by the New Partnership for Africa's Development, believing that the Partnership reflects the genuine needs of Africa. In the area of infrastructure, those needs are articulated in the Short-term Action Plan; in the agricultural field, they are set out in the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme. That reflects Japan's respect for the principles of ownership and partnership, which it regards as essential to the promotion of sustainable development in Africa.

As Mr. Yoshiro Mori, Special Envoy and former Prime Minister of Japan, stated at the opening plenary meeting held on 22 September, the Government of Japan is steadily implementing the commitments that it made at TICAD IV and has already dispatched joint public-private missions for the promotion of trade and investment to 12 African countries. Furthermore, the Japan-United Nations Development Programme Joint Framework for Building Partnership to Address Climate Change in Africa, to which Japan has contributed $92.1 million, is in the process of receiving concrete proposals for projects to be undertaken.

In order to ensure that the desired accelerated growth will benefit and empower individuals and communities and not aggravate social and economic disparities, the principle of human security needs to be taken into consideration in the implementation of policy measures, especially those relating to the achievement of the MDGs. Japan stands ready to provide just such support to the efforts made by the nations of Africa in areas including education, health and community development.

We also received another vital message from Africa's leaders — there is an essential linkage between peace and development. Japan, as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, is committed to providing a range of assistance to post-conflict countries, which, we hope, will better enable them to avoid relapsing into violence and instead achieve a durable peace. We have already taken steps to that end by extending support to training centres for peacekeeping operations in Africa, and other assistance will follow.

The progress that we make in fulfilling all those commitments will be closely monitored via the TICAD Follow-up Mechanism, which includes annual ministerial follow-up meetings. The importance of follow-up was mentioned by almost every African leader last week, and the Government of Japan stands ready to monitor, follow up on and assess the steps taken to honour the commitments made not only by Japan, but by all relevant stakeholders represented at TICAD IV.

Regarding agenda item 46, I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the Secretary-General's report entitled "2001-2010: Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa" (A/63/219) and for the *World Malaria Report 2008*, recently issued by the World Health Organization (WHO). My delegation was pleased to learn from those reports that the number of deaths attributed to malaria has declined in several African countries and that a few of those countries have even managed to cut such deaths in half by implementing the measures recommended by WHO. In addition, the reports showed that increases in funding resulted in accelerated access to malaria interventions, such as the provision of bednets and medicines, in 2006.

Nevertheless, my delegation notes with concern that the number of malaria cases worldwide is still estimated to be as high as 247 million for 2006 and that children under five remain by far the most likely to die of the disease. We also note that in Africa, only 3 per cent of children in need have access to artemisinin-based combination therapy, which is recommended by WHO.

In July, G8 leaders met on the occasion of the Hokkaido Toyako summit, hosted by the Government of Japan. It was there that the G8 leaders agreed on the importance of ensuring that a comprehensive approach embodying disease-specific measures and the strengthening of health systems contributes to achieving all the health-related MDGs by focusing in particular on the capacity-building of health workers. The Toyako Framework for Action, which was set forth by the G8 health experts, includes principles for action; sets out actions to be taken in the area of health, drawing on the expertise of international institutions; and provides for the establishment of a follow-up mechanism for monitoring progress in meeting the commitments made.

My delegation recognizes the positive impact that the efforts of a number of stakeholders have had. I refer in particular to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, to which Japan pledged an additional $560 million earlier this year. My delegation also welcomed the Global Malaria Action Plan and other outcomes announced at the 2008 Millennium Development Goals Malaria Summit that took place on 25 September on the initiative of Mr. Ray Chambers, the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Malaria.

G8 leaders also agreed to focus on promoting the expansion of access to long-lasting insecticide-treated nets, with a view to providing 100 million nets through bilateral and multilateral assistance, in partnership with other stakeholders by the end of 2010. I would note in this regard that a number of African countries have expressed great appreciation for one such net, the Olyset net, made by Sumitomo Chemical. This net is made in Africa, and Japan hopes that both the net itself and its production will contribute to sustainable development in Africa.

In closing, my delegation would like to reaffirm Japan's readiness to contribute constructively and concretely to the development of an Africa, that will realize its vast potential, a truly vibrant Africa a continent of hope and opportunity.

Mr. Abdelaziz (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his reports on progress achieved in the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) (A/63/206) and on the implementation of the recommendations contained in his report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/63/212) and for transmitting the report on the Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa (see A/63/219).

I would also like to align myself with the statement made by the representative of Kenya on behalf of the African Group and the statement to be made by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

We meet today in exceptional economic circumstances, with a growing number of crises, related to food, energy, international financial markets, and climate change. There is no doubt that it is the African continent that will be the most adversely affected by this series of developments. This is particularly true as most of its countries are far from achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

What makes the situation worse is that our African continent is home to the largest number of least developed countries whose development efforts will be hampered by these crises, at a time when we have convened two high-level meetings, one on Africa's development needs and one on the implementation of MDGs, with the goal of increasing financial assistance directed to Africa.

The international community, particularly the developed countries, and the international financial institutions, must therefore act at a speed that corresponds to the pace of these exceptional developments and their negative repercussions on African States. Undoubtedly, the implementation of the political declaration on Africa's development needs (resolution 63/1), along with the proposals put forward by our leaders at the high-level meeting on the MDGs, constitute a strong basis to build on in this context. This is further strengthened by the decisions taken at the eleventh African Union Summit, held in Sharm el-Sheikh, which form a road map for the comprehensive development of Africa and for supporting the implementation of NEPAD.

There is no doubt that the starting point lies in the scrupulous implementation of agreements reached aimed at establishing, by the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly, a follow-up mechanism to review the implementation of development commitments to Africa. Egypt has long called for such a mechanism as

a vital basis for evaluating the fulfilment of each side's commitments.

From this perspective, I would like to recall that African countries have taken major strides towards implementing their NEPAD commitments in various fields, such as infrastructure, health, agriculture, education, information and communications technology, science and technology, implementing sound economic policies, and, in particular, the establishment and operation of the African Peer Review Mechanism, which now comprises 29 African States. This demonstrates that the continent has achieved real progress in the areas of good governance, respect for human rights and promoting democracy in a cooperative context. That stresses the African commitment towards development, peace and human rights as a basis for progress.

On the other hand, we see industrialized countries of the Group of Eight lagging behind in achieving the goal of doubling their assistance to Africa by 2010. The continent's overall share of foreign direct investments remain low, and continues to be confined to a limited number of States and sectors.

In addition, the failure to reach an agreement in the Doha Development Round is unfortunate at a time when Africa's share of international trade is a mere 2 per cent. While we welcome the progress achieved by the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative and the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative, we note that progress remains slow. This highlights the need for new and innovative sources to finance the development of African States, particularly in the light of the exceptional economic circumstances that we face today. There is no doubt that the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held in Doha at the end of November, will provide a window of opportunity to emphasize all mutual agreements in this regard.

This brings me to the important role played by the United Nations in support of Africa's development efforts. We call for strengthening that role in parallel with the positive role already being played by the African Union, regional organizations and institutions such as the African Development Bank, the Economic Commission for Africa, as well as with the crucial efforts made at the subregional level, through African economic groupings. We look forward to reflecting all of these efforts in the outcomes of this year's development-related meetings, with a view to addressing more effectively the development needs of the continent.

Egypt supports the steps taken by the United Nations, over the past year, in cooperation with the African Union to address conflicts in Africa, through preventive diplomacy, mediation and good offices. Such commendable efforts have led to the peaceful settlement of internal disputes that erupted in Kenya and in Zimbabwe, and to stabilizing the various other conflict situations in Africa.

Along the same lines, Egypt supports United Nations and African Union peacekeeping efforts in several African countries, including through our large military contribution to the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). Moreover, Egypt backs the Peacebuilding Commission's efforts in Burundi, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau and the Central African Republic and those of the Peacebuilding Fund to finance peacebuilding projects through its three-window architecture. We affirm the need to enhance cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union on peacebuilding issues along the lines of existing cooperation in the fields of peacekeeping and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

I commend the existing cooperation between the United Nations Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council and applaud the two Councils for holding a joint meeting in April 2008, at which they exchanged views on the situations in the Sudan, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Côte d'Ivoire.

Since the Millennium Summit launched the Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, particularly in Africa, there has been success in bringing the number of malaria-free countries to 93. A tangible reduction in infection rates was also achieved in a number of other countries. This was the result of programmes being implemented in cooperation with the United Nations and its relevant bodies, international financial institutions, non-governmental organizations, civil society and the private sector as well as to the increase in available funding for such programmes. However, the continuing spread of the disease in 109 countries reaffirms the need for continued support and sustainability of funding in order to cut the mortality rate by half by 2010, with a

view to cutting mortality by 75 per cent by 2015. Almost half of the world's population is still threatened by malaria, which kills more than 800,000 people a year, most of whom reside in low-income countries and 91 per cent of whom live in Africa, which retains the highest risk level worldwide.

These facts underline the dire need to support efforts to revamp the economic, educational and health infrastructure in developing countries. There is also a serious need to transfer the technical knowledge necessary to support these efforts and ensure early diagnosis, treatment and prevention of disease through the participation of all stakeholders. This approach entails intensifying national awareness campaigns and implementing prevention and treatment programmes. Most countries, especially those in Africa, cannot succeed in these tasks alone. We should take into consideration techniques such as spraying and immunization.

Parallel to national capacity-building, it is imperative to concentrate on enhancing regional capacities to confront the cross-border aspects of malaria. That was one of the motivations behind the decision taken at the African Union summit held in Sirte in 2005, based on an Egyptian initiative that called for establishing an African Centre to encourage cooperation and exchange of knowledge in combating the disease. The centre would be linked with specialized centres in this field at the continent level.

It is also imperative in this regard to resolve the trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights attaching to malaria medications and vaccines currently in circulation or being developed. The international community must shoulder its responsibility so as to ensure the effectiveness of efforts to eliminate malaria and the risk of its resurgence. In that way, we would realize our common goals, particularly MDG6, by the targeted date, and in all States without exception.

Mr. McNee (Canada): Canada is pleased once again to join this important debate on Africa. The past year has seen great changes in the global economic situation. We have seen commodity prices rise to historic highs, then fall. We have seen instability in the financial and stock markets, as well as double- and triple-digit inflation in food prices. These challenges are in addition to others such as climate change and the enduring peace and security problems of the continent.

At the midpoint to 2015, it is clear that, while there has been some progress, much remains to be done to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Achieving the MDGs is a shared responsibility requiring an agreed approach, continuous efforts and sustained partnerships.

Canada is doing its part to help Africa's efforts to achieve the MDGs, and Canada is meeting its commitments. We are doubling our international assistance to reach $5 billion by 2010 and, in particular, we are meeting our commitment to double aid to Africa, increasing it to $2.1 billion this year. Canada is also untying all its food aid and will untie all its development assistance by 2012, consistent with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action. Untying aid will make Canada's aid more effective and help Canada do its part in this global development challenge.

Canada has made important contributions to the achievement of the MDGs, particularly in the areas of food security, child health and education. For example, Canada has committed itself to increasing its annual bilateral support for basic education in Africa from $100 million to $150 million by 2010. Over the past five years, Canada's support to education in Africa helped over 6 million children, half of them girls, to attend school in our partner countries.

Development must also proceed in the private sphere. Canada is one of the world leaders in demonstrating how natural resources, managed in a sustainable way, can provide broad economic and social benefits without adversely affecting the environment. Canadian companies working in Africa are committed to being good corporate citizens, and the Canadian Government expects them to be good corporate citizens.

Canada initiated the African Mining Partnership with African nations to deal with the crucial issues of governance, sustainable development of communities, human resource skills and institutional capacity, and to provide basic requirements such as water and sanitation, primary health care and education.

Development success and partnerships are underpinned by effective democratic governance networks. Canada's assistance includes strengthening democratic institutions and practices, such as electoral and legislative systems. It is focused on the

engagement of both civil society and individual citizens, particularly women, in the political process.

Through the establishment of a Democratic Transitions Fund, Canada is working to respond better to crises affecting young democracies and to strengthen international stability through support of democratic governance. The main objective of Canada's democracy support efforts abroad is to strengthen core democratic elements that give citizens a greater say over the institutions and decisions that affect their lives. These core elements are electoral systems, parliaments, civil society, independent media and political parties.

Canada's support for the running of free and fair elections over the past decade has included initiatives in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Tanzania and Zambia. We are encouraged by the increase in free and fair elections in Africa but note at the same time that there have been, in the past year, a few examples of defective electoral processes that have thrown societies into turmoil. As a result, precious time, attention and resources have been consumed and lives have been lost and shattered due to these events.

In the light of what occurred in the past year, and looking forward to electoral processes in other African nations, Canada urges the Governments of Africa to fulfil the promise made to their citizens at the African Union summit in January of last year when they adopted the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance.

Canada is proud to be continuing its work with African partners in support of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). Canada is encouraged that these will be integrated into the workings of the African Union. Canada was the first contributor to the APRM Trust Fund. We recently committed another $5 million to help enable progress in encouraging adherence to democratic governance principles through self-monitoring and peer monitoring. The past year has seen another two countries sign onto the APRM. We look forward to the integration of this mechanism into the African Union, leading to even more commitments.

(*spoke in French*)

Canada acknowledges the significant progress made in improving the peace and security situation in Africa, while we note that many challenges remain. Canada commends the African Union for progress on the development of the African Peace and Security Architecture and is prepared to work with partners towards the realization of the African Standby Force training and implementation plan in line with the principles of African leadership and ownership. In support of this effort, Canada announced a contribution of $10.3 million for capacity-building work for police peacekeeping in Africa and for the development of African peacekeeping centres of excellence.

My country is currently part of the international effort to end the suffering of the populations of Darfur in the Sudan. Moreover, both diplomatically and financially, we are at the frontlines of efforts to promote sustainable peace. The seriousness of the deteriorating humanitarian situation in that region, coupled with the ongoing impasse in the peace process, is a source of deep concern. In that regard, Canada calls on all parties to the conflict to halt hostilities and human rights violations — which to date have been carried out with impunity — protect civilians, facilitate humanitarian operations and the deployment of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur and support the work of the United Nations-African Union Joint Chief Mediator.

Since 2006, my country has made a very substantial contribution — totalling $477 million — to peace and to meeting basic human needs throughout the Sudan. Canada is actively participating in efforts aimed at the full implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. In line with the Agreement, elections are to be held in 2009. I wish to underscore the need for those elections to be free and fair.

The recent renewal of confrontation and activity by opposing forces in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo has almost completely dashed the hopes for peace and stability engendered by the Nairobi communiqué, the Goma agreements and the entry into force of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region. We urge all parties to respect State authority and the commitments made.

In conclusion, along with our African partners, I would like to express our satisfaction over the achievements of the past year. Nevertheless, we must not forget the challenges that emerged during the same year, namely, the rise in the price of foodstuffs, market

instability and electoral problems, all of which add to the ongoing difficulties faced by peace and security on the continent. It is worth noting once again that the achievement of the MDGs is a joint responsibility. Canada will contribute to solving the problems facing Africans, in particular by honouring the crucial commitment of doubling assistance to the continent.

Mr. Natalegawa (Indonesia): At the outset, allow me to associate myself with the statement made by the representative of Thailand on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and with the one to be made by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the G77 and China.

Indonesia would like to commend the Secretary-General for his report (A/63/206) submitted under the agenda item on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). It is very encouraging to learn from the report that noteworthy progress has been made by many African countries in the area of development. That progress is especially commendable given the persistent challenges facing the continent.

There is no denying that a gentle breeze of change is blowing across Africa. Peace and peacebuilding are emerging in areas where there was once only conflict. The wheel of development is beginning to rotate in an unrelenting manner on the continent. The results of recent initiatives augur well for Africa's future. Development and peace are now merging to create conditions for sustained progress. That is due in no small part to the role being played by the United Nations. The work of the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission in supporting peace as a prerequisite for sustainable development is commendable.

Indonesia believes that the private sector should also play a role in providing both financial and non-financial support for the efforts of the Peacebuilding Commission. To that end, earlier this year, Indonesia facilitated the establishment of a task force by the Commission's Organizational Committee. The task force focused on tangible ways by which the Commission will be able to strengthen the private sector's engagement in post-conflict peacebuilding.

With peace, African countries will be able to pursue their development. Through the New Partnership for Africa's Development, Africa's leaders and peoples are seeking integration into the global economy. That vision for the continent is an important progressive step. Indonesia therefore welcomes NEPAD's role as a catalyst for change. It is the means whereby Africa will experience peace and security, democracy, good governance and capacity-building and improve its macroeconomic development frameworks.

On the whole, international development support for Africa is intensifying, but the pace for such support must be accelerated. There are signs that that is already beginning to take place. International initiatives, such as debt relief and cancellation and aid-for-trade, are being implemented. However, the magnitude of Africa's development challenges demands ever-increasing support and commitment. The public health threat from HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other communicable diseases has not diminished. Africa's high child mortality rate needs to be reduced. Poverty, the lack of investment and infrastructure development and low productivity all obstruct development. They undermine the continent's capacity to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

With the current global financial, food and energy crises, as well as climate change, Africa finds itself at a great disadvantage in pursuing the MDGs. To change its fate, the international community needs to support Africa in the same way it did Europe after the two world wars.

Global partnership and international support are imperative. They must allow Africa to maximize its potential and use its domestic resources for growth and development.

Bilateral and triangular cooperation, as well as South-South cooperation, are important in that regard. Through public-private and private-private partnerships, Africa's creative capacities must be expanded. International support must also include financing for the successful implementation of various domestic initiatives.

Other mechanisms can contribute to Africa's development as well. Accordingly, Asia and Africa, with Indonesia and South Africa as co-chairs, have been deepening their special historical relationship. The solidarity of the 1955 Asia-Africa Conference held in Bandung, Indonesia, has been renewed under the New Asian-African Strategic Partnership (NAASP) of 2005. That is the foundation of our regions' closeness. Through the Partnership, Indonesia has built a solid base for extensive cooperation. In the field of agriculture and food security, Indonesia has assisted

with capacity-building. Appropriate technology has been transferred and we are currently working with a number of countries in Africa to develop rice fields, with seed varieties that suit the continent's weather and farming conditions.

Along with the Strategic Partnership, use is being made of the Non-Aligned Movement's Centre for South-South Technical Cooperation in Jakarta to assist and support Africa in catching up in the development race. Indonesia is also providing support and technical cooperation in areas such as education, poverty alleviation, science and technology and microfinancing.

Our ultimate goal is to put Africa on track for achieving the MDGs. Ensuring that Africa succeeds in its development must continue to be a matter of global concern. That success will contribute to global economic growth, peace and security. Consequently, there must be no slackening of support for Africa's progress. Should that happen, the current development momentum will quickly lose power. But not only must international support be consistent, it must also be adequate and sustainable. At all times, the development paradigm on the continent must be specific to African particularities and benefit from African leadership.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): My delegation wishes to associate itself with the statements made by the representative of Kenya on behalf of the African Group and by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Also, my delegation wishes to thank the Secretary-General for his three reports on the items we are discussing today, namely, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) (A/63/206), causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/63/212) and the Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa (A/63/219).

We come here today overshadowed by major crises that have a direct impact on the African continent — high food prices, the scarcity of food and high fuel prices, as well as the uncertainty in the global financial system. All of these are intertwined and pose a threat not only to the achievement of NEPAD, but to all the progress we have seen in the past few years.

High food prices cut directly into the incomes of the poorest and reduce the resources available to feed our people. Increased prices also strain the commitments African Governments have made to the social security, education and health care of our people.

Moreover, the uncertainty in the international financial system will, in turn, threaten or even undermine the coherence and consistency of the financial and trading systems and their support of development. This has made the mobilization of resources more difficult, thereby raising the spectre of unsustainable debt once again, haunting heavily indebted poor countries in Africa.

The global community needs to take urgent action in support of NEPAD to ensure that the economic development gap between Africa and developed countries does not increase further. This is important in order to make certain that the impact of developed countries' monetary policies, trade policies and, in particular, trade distorting subsidies do not place extra financial and economic burdens on Africa.

We must thus take a holistic approach to the interconnected national, international and systemic challenges of financing for development, one which is gender-sensitive and people-centred, particularly in the context of Africa's development.

Collective and coherent action is needed in each interrelated area, involving all stakeholders in an active partnership to ensure the success of NEPAD. More than ever before, Africa needs the global community to display the unequivocal political will to urgently operationalize and implement all commitments made to Africa.

It is clear that, despite all the actions and commitments by the African countries and institutions, the main constraint remains the lack of resources, be it financial or otherwise. It is therefore evident that for NEPAD to succeed, it needs to become a true partnership between Africa and the international community.

In order for us to succeed, the United Nations must, in accordance with the political declaration on Africa's development needs, adopted at the beginning of the sixty-third session, consider a monitoring mechanism to review the full and timely implementation of all commitments related to Africa's development no later than in the sixty-fifth session.

My delegation concurs with the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict and the

promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. The African Union has made substantial progress in conflict prevention on the continent. It is now up to the international community to press forward with increased dedication, together with African regional organizations, to assure lasting peace and development in the face of growing global challenges and crisis.

From an African perspective, the overarching objective of Africa's NEPAD process of renewal is the African renaissance, a move to break the vicious cycle of political instability, conflict, poverty and underdevelopment and to underpin the continent's capacity to defend and advance its own interests in the global arena. The key building blocks of this renaissance strategy include greater unity and solidarity, acceleration of political and socio-economic integration and increased international support.

The African Union has taken full ownership and responsibility for peace and security on the African continent. We have developed a continental security architecture, established an African Standby Force and articulated a wide range of underpinning norms and values, all aimed at conflict prevention, resolution and post-conflict reconstruction.

However, if Africa is to succeed in the peace and security sector, a global partnership will also be necessary. The role of the international community must be aimed at supporting African-owned priorities for conflict prevention, conflict management and post-conflict situations.

Without peace and security, the so-called threats to Africa, such as poverty, disease and illiteracy, will remain unchecked. This points to the need for a stronger development focus in the international community's approach. The building structures for peace and security have to incorporate their socio-economic and political aspects. After all, both the causes and consequences of conflict and instability in Africa are clearly linked to global developments and relations in the international arena.

Finally, my delegation wishes to touch briefly on agenda item 43, including the report of the World Health Organization (WHO) on rolling back malaria in developing countries, especially in Africa (see A/63/219). South Africa is one of the signatories of the Abuja Declaration, in which we committed ourselves to reducing malaria morbidity and mortality by 50 per cent by the year 2010. Although some may argue that we have already achieved this target, rolling back malaria encompasses more than the decrease in morbidity and mortality. As this year's theme to commemorate World Malaria Day, 25 April 2008, suggested, malaria is a disease without borders and it therefore becomes crucial to form partnerships in combating it.

It is the conviction of my delegation that the fight against malaria can be won, by destroying the mosquitoes that cause the disease. As the WHO report notes, the aims of the global fight against malaria are not only to reduce the burden of the disease in endemic areas, but also to reduce and confine the geographical extent of malaria-endemic areas in the world. This entails the elimination of malaria from countries and localities where this is feasible. We are committed to doing that.

Mr. Swe (Myanmar): First of all, I wish to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (A/63/206) under sub-item (a) of agenda item 57, on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). My delegation is convinced that the successful implementation of NEPAD is central to the achievement of sustainable development for Africa.

My delegation associates itself with the statements made by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by the representative of Thailand on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Six years ago, the General Assembly adopted resolution 57/2, entitled "United Nations Declaration on the New Partnership for Africa's Development", demonstrating the international community's support for Africa's home-grown initiative. The special development needs of Africa were recognized at many major United Nations conferences and summits and at the recent high-level meeting held to address that issue.

The international community must give due recognition to the efforts made by African countries. They have taken firm ownership and leadership of NEPAD. They have firmly set priorities; they have taken initiatives, individually and collectively; and they have carried out administrative, civil service, economic and judiciary reforms to bring about change on the continent and to strive for sustainable growth and development.

During the past four years, Africa has achieved record economic growth. In 2007, the continent registered a gross domestic product growth rate of 5.8 per cent. However, the decline in official development assistance (ODA), the rise in food and fuel prices, the recent financial crisis and the impact of climate change threaten to reverse the progress achieved.

Africa is a continent full of dynamism and potential. However, in the face of new and growing challenges, the continued strong support of the United Nations system and the international community will be necessary to make poverty eradication and development in Africa a reality. The international community must help Africa to help itself. In that regard, I should like to explore a few areas in which international support would significantly help Africa's development.

Trade plays an important role in promoting economic growth. Despite the fact that Africa, with more than 920 million inhabitants, represents 12 per cent of the world's population, its share of international trade is only 2 per cent. The promotion of an equitable and fair multilateral trading system would go a long way in promoting Africa's trade prospects. Agricultural subsidies, tariff and non-tariff barriers and other trade-distorting measures must be eliminated to expand market access to African products. A successful conclusion of the Doha Round with the development dimension at its core is also necessary to improve Africa's trade prospects.

The decline in ODA in recent years constitutes a development impediment for many developing countries, particularly those in Africa, which must rely on ODA for many of their development projects. We call on Africa's development partners to fully implement commitments made at international conferences and the pledge made at Gleneagles. The Secretary-General's proposal that external financing for Africa be increased to $72 billion annually deserves our fullest support.

Debt sustainability is essential for growth and crucial to the success of Africa's efforts to eradicate poverty and achieve development. Currently, sub-Saharan Africa is the only region to see a real reduction in debt under the Highly Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative and the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative. Debt relief should therefore be provided to all African countries that carry heavy debt burdens. Moreover, debt relief should be fully financed through additional resources.

It is vitally important that the international community provide Africa with financial and technical support in strategic areas such as agriculture, trade, infrastructure development, health and education. Africa will need to address the challenges posed by HIV/AIDS. An intellectual property rights regime that is flexible enough to provide the general public with much-needed affordable medications would greatly benefit Africa's fight against HIV/AIDS.

Climate change can have a negative impact on the efforts of developing countries to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. African countries will need climate change financing to assist their adaptation and mitigation efforts. Here again, it must be stressed that financing for responses to climate change should be additional support in terms of resources and should not detract from the implementation of other development priorities.

The recent high-level meeting on Africa's development needs and high-level event on the Millennium Development Goals enabled the international community to renew its commitment to Africa's development. The primary responsibility for Africa's development rests with African countries. To that end, African leaders have taken bold initiatives to take charge of their own destiny. However, without strong support from the international community, Africa's path to development would be a long and winding one. Africa needs our fullest support. The international community must not fail Africa.

Mr. Dapkiunas (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): Belarus welcomes the significant increase in the General Assembly's focus on development in Africa. Less than a month after the high-level event on Africa's development needs, we are once again discussing how we can undertake joint efforts to enable the citizens of the African continent to believe in a better tomorrow.

Belarus is convinced that the future of humankind will depend upon our determination and our capacity to resolve the problems of the global systemic order that are now facing Africa. If we succeed, we will create great momentum for the development of the entire international community; if we fail, the maturity of human civilization will be called into question.

While Belarus is quite distant from Africa, we have long felt our spiritual closeness to the fate of the continent and promoted its development. Nearly 50 years ago, Belarus was among the sponsors of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, which proclaimed the need to put an end to colonialism. Later, we selflessly opened the doors of our universities to students from Africa and began to participate in the social and economic development of a number of African States.

Belarus, while not yet a donor, is prepared to do much for African countries. We are currently proposing to make educational and technological investments in Africa and to share our experience in the area of food security. At the Third International Ministerial Conference on the State of Middle Income Countries, held in Namibia in August, I served as a Vice-Chair and as keynote speaker for its energy segment.

In a number of African countries, Belarus has launched joint ventures to produce modern automobiles and tractors based on Belarusian technology and is considering increasing its participation in related infrastructure projects. At the same time, we are concerned that, at the present rate, we will not be able to double development assistance to Africa by 2010, a pledge made at the Group of Eight summit held at Gleneagles. We join in the many appeals to developed countries to take concrete measures to honour that important commitment.

Moreover, in our joint work to resolve the global crises, we are paying priority attention to the needs of the African continent. Africa is encountering considerable difficulty in its efforts to counter the negative effects of climate change, regardless of the fact that it has the lowest levels of greenhouse gas emissions. Africa's vulnerability clearly lies in its food security. The continent represents barely two per cent of overall international trade, but it is encountering serious economic problems as a result of the current financial crisis.

In that regard, we call on the relevant United Nations bodies to study in-depth the discrepancy between the cost of goods from Africa when they are brought by major transnational companies and when they are sold on world markets. We feel that corrections in that process could be one of the most important steps towards the establishment of a just world economic order.

We must also better trust the African countries to choose the ways and means of settling their continent's problems. The African Union's mandate to maintain regional peace and stability must be strengthened. The Security Council needs to find practical ways to expand the role of the African Union, especially by supporting its Peace and Security Council.

We recognize the vital need to invest broadly in energy infrastructure, as stressed in the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). In that respect, it is also important actively to promote the use of renewable sources of energy, clean energy and effective energy-saving processes. We hope that African countries will play an active role at this session of the General Assembly in thematic discussion on the need for all States to seek energy-saving technologies and the use of alternative and renewable energy resources.

The role of African countries in resolving urgent problems within their own system is critical. In that connection, we note that we are encouraged that the African Union has decided to make contributions to help advance work on a comprehensive plan of action to fight traffic in persons. We welcome the decision taken at the African Union summit to launch negotiations on the comprehensive plan. Belarus has advocated the idea of such a plan for several years, and we are ready to work practically together with the African countries to make it a reality.

We also wish to invite our African partners to consider the feasibility of working with the United Nations system, above all on the basis of the attainments of NEPAD, on a long-term coordinated Africa-United Nations strategy for action along the lines of the joint Africa-European Union strategy. Such a strategy would enable the development on a global level of a vector for African development that would have a positive impact on the coordination of work to assist the peoples of the continent.

Mr. Taha (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation associates itself with the statements to be made by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by the representative of Kenya on behalf of the African Group.

Africa has made considerable progress since the beginning of the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The

Partnership demonstrates the will and the commitment of the African countries to put the continent on the road to economic and social development by controlling its own development actions. Today, halfway through the timeline towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015, Africa is the only continent suffering from major obstacles to its efforts to combat poverty and want. Therefore, the international community must mobilize its efforts to help Africa to implement effectively all parts of NEPAD and all its commitments under NEPAD without delay.

The high-level meeting of the General Assembly on 22 September was held to address the particular needs of African development and to assess the implementation of commitments and the challenges of the future. It represented an important step towards strengthening NEPAD. The political declaration concerning the specific needs of Africa stresses the commitment of heads of State and Governments, Ministers and the various delegations at the United Nations to the particular needs of Africa, as reflected in the Millennium Declaration, the United Nations Declaration on NEPAD and the Monterrey Consensus adopted at the International Conference on Financing for Development, and the Outcome Document of the 2005 World Summit. All of those instruments were designed to strengthen the international partnership between countries on the basis of common values and the mobilization of human, technological and financial resources to fight poverty, hunger and underdevelopment in Africa. They all reflect the commitments we have entered into.

Extensive consultations are under way on the draft final document of the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development, introduced by the President of the General Assembly in accordance with resolution 62/187, in preparation for the Doha Conference to be held from 29 November to 2 December 2008, seven years after the historic Conference held in Monterrey, Mexico.

We therefore call on the international community to implement all of its commitments to eradicate poverty, to strengthen sustainable development, and create equitable and inclusive world economic systems to respond to the needs of developing countries, especially in Africa, and enhance their integration into the international markets.

Developed countries should end their agricultural subsidies, especially since the MDG Africa Steering Group emphasizes that such subsidies undermine agricultural development, a process that would facilitate economic reform throughout the world.

Regional organizations working to establish lasting peace in Africa play a key role, especially in post-conflict countries. I appeal to all for the full implementation of the 10-year plan for capacity-building of peacekeeping forces in Africa and to strengthen regional consultation mechanisms, in order to effectively support the African Union and its established programmes in the context of NEPAD.

Despite current progress, such efforts remain inadequate for low-income countries. Today, there is a need to expand assistance for the heavily indebted countries and to alleviate multilateral debt in order to help those countries perform optimally when taking on the challenges that lie ahead.

In that context, the official development assistance (ODA) provided to Africa is still lagging behind the pledges of 2005 to raise it to $25 billion by 2010. Despite the fact that some donor countries, members of the Commission on Sustainable Development, have established definite plans to provide further aid to Africa, many others have yet to honour their commitments. We emphasize here that the quality of such assistance is just as important as the quantity. We also stress that the instability and the fluctuation of assistance is a dangerous problem for Africa.

The creation of a peaceful environment is a sine qua non for ensuring economic and social development. We have broad experience in the field of durable peace in the Sudan, and the wealth-sharing measures we have adopted are essential elements of the three peace agreements we have signed. Perhaps the Sudan's joining of inter-African mechanisms has cleared the way for various Government agencies, as well as all stakeholders, civil society and the private sector, to implement the aforementioned mechanisms in order to strengthen the role of women, democracy, accountability and the rule of law.

Approximately half of the world's population is exposed to malaria. In 2006, 3.3 billion individuals suffered from the disease, of whom 1 million have already died. The majority of the Sudanese population is in danger of infection from malaria. There are 7 million cases of the disease per year, from which there are 35,000 deaths. Scientific studies in this area emphasize the negative effects of climate change on the rate of incidence, given that high temperatures

extend the lives of the mosquitoes that carry this disease, directly affecting the social and economic development of the country. The Sudan has therefore created a national strategy to fight malaria, creating a special entity to strengthen the means of controlling the spread of the disease, thus enabling better prevention and treatment.

The slackening of the world economy, the increase in food prices and climate change are all factors that prevent us from attaining concrete results in implementing NEPAD and in the fight against malaria. Those factors jeopardize our ability to achieve the MDGs by 2015. Thus, real determination and clear leadership are needed on the part of our development partners and the African countries themselves in order to introduce meaningful reforms to the debt and international trade systems, to facilitate access to the World Trade Organization by developing countries, and to increase ODA. All such action must be calibrated with the national ownership and development plans of developing countries, while honouring in a timely manner the commitments that have been undertaken. The responsibility for development is a collective responsibility based on a just international partnership.

Mr. Raja (India): India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, speaking at the Asia-Africa Conference at Bandung in 1955, described Asia and Africa as "sister continents". That vision of India and Africa, with our shared historical experience of fighting colonialism and multidimensional backwardness, and our common journey with a common destination, remains at the centre of India's links with Africa.

India, which hosted the first-ever India-Africa Partnership Forum Summit in New Delhi in April 2008, is therefore extremely pleased to participate in today's discussion on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

We would like at the outset to take note of the high-level meeting on the theme "Africa's development needs: state of implementation of various commitments, challenges and the way forward", held in New York on 22 September 2008. We would like to take particular note of paragraph 39 of the political declaration adopted at the meeting which stated, inter alia, that,

> "All commitments to and by Africa should be effectively implemented and given appropriate follow-up by the international community and by Africa itself. We underscore the urgency of finding solutions to Africa's major challenges." (*resolution 63/1, para. 39*)

India would also like to echo the call of the Chairman of the African Union, made at that meeting, that Africa deserves special attention. The strides being made by Africa in areas such as infrastructure, agriculture, health, human resources development, science and technology and information and communications technology are evident. They are also portents that indicate the awakening of a giant that will immutably transform the international political and economic order.

The Secretary-General, in his report entitled "New Partnership for Africa's Development: sixth consolidated progress report on implementation and international support" (A/63/206), provides details of the progress made in the various priority areas of NEPAD and analyses the response of the international community in support of NEPAD. We are particularly concerned, in the light of the political declaration, that he has called for urgent implementation of international commitments, including a reversal in the decline of development assistance. We endorse the reminder by the Chairman of the African Union of the moral obligation of the international community to assist Africa in pulling itself out of the poverty trap.

India has always been committed to elevating its special engagement with Africa into an enduring partnership. We have a long-standing, close and multilayered relationship with Africa based on our abiding commitment to working with the continent to fulfil its aspirations. Our partnership encompasses priority sectors integral to the development goals of Africa in the twenty-first century. A vibrant India and a resurgent Africa are witnessing an intensification of relations and a growing convergence of interests in their common quest for sustainable economic growth and development.

The Delhi Declaration and the Africa-India Framework for Cooperation, adopted by India and Africa earlier this year, highlight our shared vision and world view. The Delhi Declaration is based on equality and mutual respect. The Framework of Cooperation, adopted at the summit, outlines the priority areas of our future engagement. Taken together, they provide a sound foundation for the intensification of our engagement in the years to come.

India is committed to working together with Africa in accordance with the continent's priorities. Areas of cooperation include capacity-building, agriculture, infrastructure development, health and food security and technology cooperation. India also

announced the enhancement of the available concessional lines of credit for Africa to $5.4 billion. India sincerely aspires to a long-term partnership with Africa and is therefore investing in building economic infrastructure, including railways, information technology, telecommunications and power.

For India, capacity-building in Africa has been an area of priority. Since 1964, through the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme, India has worked with Africa to place thousands of African students in professional institutions in India under scholarship schemes. Over 15,000 African students are currently studying in Indian universities and colleges. India will, over the next five to six years, undertake, on a grant basis, projects in critical areas focusing on education, science, information technology, agriculture and renewable energy. India now offers a substantially higher number of training slots and has also doubled long-term scholarships. We have allocated $500 million to that purpose.

The Pan-African e-Network Project is a shining example of the India-Africa partnership. India has gifted a satellite dedicated to e-connectivity in sub-Saharan Africa to help bridge the digital divide. The Project is fully financed by the Government of India and was launched from Addis Ababa, with a satellite hub in Dakar. It links major universities in different regions of Africa with major Indian universities and centres of excellence in India, and also links major hospitals in Africa with super-specialty hospitals in India. Thirty countries have already joined the Project to provide quality tele-education and tele-medicine.

The Secretary-General, in his report on NEPAD, has called for the long-overdue successful outcome of the Doha Round of multilateral trade negotiations encompassing a development dimension. At the India-Africa Partnership Forum Summit, India and Africa decided to work together with the World Trade Organization on pressing global issues of shared interests and concerns, such as the issue of cotton subsidies. India has made a unilateral announcement of duty- and quota-free market access to goods from 34 least developed countries in Africa. That will spur economic activity in manufacturing, particularly for African small and medium-sized enterprises, by allowing them enhanced market access to one of the fastest-growing economies in the world.

India, like Africa, has been affected by the global economic slowdown, the international economic and financial crisis, and higher food and oil prices. Those, as well as issues such as climate change, the reform and democratization of international institutions, the fight against terrorism, combating diseases, the eradication of hunger and poverty and the promotion of pluralism and democracy, are all on our common agenda.

Africa's fight against malaria — which is dealt with in the Secretary-General's report (A/63/219), transmitting the World Health Organization's report and entitled "2001-2010: Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa" — remains an uphill task. Although there are signs that some progress might be taking place, it is a fact that resources and access to treatment remain inadequate and there is no evidence of a decline of malaria in Africa. The appearance of resistant falciparum strains is a matter of particular concern.

While a number of preventive measures, such as the distribution of treated mosquito nets, are being undertaken, it also remains a fact that the developing world's ability to combat public health crises of that nature requires fundamental changes in the intellectual property regime. The Doha Declaration enshrines the principle that trade rules on patents are not as important as public health. Access to medicines is a fundamental part of the right to health. It is a matter of regret that this principle remains more in the realm of theory than practice.

In conclusion, I would like to state that it is our firm conviction that success in achieving the objectives of NEPAD depends on an African-led and Africa-developed agenda. With the rich human and natural resources available in Africa and the commitment of Africa's leaders to achieving the objectives of NEPAD, success can be achieved if NEPAD receives the dedicated support of the international community in realizing the African dream.

Programme of work

The Acting President: I wish to inform members that, at the request of the sponsor, the consideration of item 113, "Multilingualism", which was scheduled for Monday, 20 October, has been postponed to a later date to be announced.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.